THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) The minimum support price (MSP) of wheat was raised from Rs. 610 per quintal of 2000-01 crop to Rs. 620 per quintal of 2001-02 crop, thus marking an increasing of Rs. 10 per quintal.

(b) and (c) The State Government of Karnataka requested for upward fixation of MSP of copra for 2002 season as compared to 2001 season. But keeping in mind the various factors taken into account in fixation of MSP, the Government decided to fix the MSP of copra for the 2002 season at last year's MSP. The National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited (NAFED) will continue to act as the central nodal agency to undertake price support operations of copra, during 2002 season.

The Report of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) on price policy for Kharif crops of 2002-2003 season (including arhar, ragi and maize) has been circulated among the State Governments for obtaining their views/comments. The views/comments of the State Government of Karnataka are still awaited. While announcing revised prices for these crops, views of the State Government will be duly taken into consideration.

Contribution of agriculture towards GDP

1789. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the percentage contribution of agriculture sector towards Gross Domestic Product of the country has decreased;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) what action is being taken by Government to arrest this trend?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir. The share of the sector, "Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing" in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at current prices has declined gradually from 56.9 per cent in the year 1950-51 to 25.0 per cent in 2001-02.

(b) and (c) The decline in the share of agriculture in GDP is due to

the faster growth of non-agricultural sectors, which is generally observed in the process of economic development. However, Government have been implementing various programmes for increasing agricultural production and productivity, and as a consequence, contribution of agriculture to GDP in absolute terms has been showing an increasing trend.

National Seed Board

1790. SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to set up National Seed Board;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government also propose to make it mandatory for seed companies to go through trials in ICAR approved labs;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI RUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The draft Bill to replace the existing Seeds Act provides for the establishment of the National Seeds Board in replacement of the Central Seed Committee and Central Seed Certification Board.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Seeds of all kinds and varieties shall be subject to compulsory registration on the basis of information provided by the producer on the results of multi locational trials to establish Value for Cultivation and Usage.

Agriculture Policy for NER

1791. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the farmers who attended a two-day semiar in Guwahati